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SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORG SEEKS UNSC SUPPORT ON
SOMALIA PIRACY

REF: LONDON 02302

11. (SBU) International Maritime Organization
Secretary General Mitropoulos sent a letter on July 18

SIPDIS
to Ambassador Tuttle expressing appreciation for the
USG support at the last IMO Council meeting to address
the worsening situation of piracy and armed robbery
against ships in the waters off the coast of Somalia
(reftel). The IMO SecGen's letter also requests
further support when the matter comes up for debate at
the UN Security Council. Text of letter at para 2.

12. (U) Text of July 18, 2007 letter from IMO
Secretary General Mitropoulos to Ambassador Tuttle:

SIPDIS

18 July 2007

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the worsening situation
of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the
waters off the coast of Somalia and address you in the
context of a recent request of the IMO Council that
the matter be brought to the attention of the United
Nations Security Council.

By way of background, I would mention that, upon the
instruction of the IMO Assembly, this matter was first
brought to the attention of the Security Council in
November 2005 (resolution A.979(24) refers, copy
attached). Subsequently, the President of the
Security Council issued a Statement dated 15 March
2006 (document S/PRST/2006/11 refers - in particular,
the 11th paragraph thereof, copy attached), which must
have certainly played a positive role in the notable
reduction of such attacks in the past year.

Regrettably, since the beginning of the current year,

there have been renewed attacks against ships in the same area (especially attacks on ships carrying humanitarian aid, such as those operated under the auspices of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)), resulting in loss of life, hijacking of ships, kidnapping of innocent crew, loss of humanitarian aid cargoes and demands for ransom.

The attackers invariably follow two patterns:

- they either attack ships on the high seas, not unusually at considerable distances from the shore, allegedly making use of "mother ships"; or
- they attack (and hijack) ships in Somalia's territorial sea, sometimes under the

watchful surveillance of warships outside those waters, which are, however, not empowered to intervene for international law reasons.

In the light of these worrying developments, I brought the issue to the attention of the IMO Council at its recent ninety-eighth session (25 to 29 June 2007), which, sharing my concerns, authorized me, through the UN Secretary-General:

(1.) to seek the further engagement of the United Nations Security Council to promote and facilitate the international community's efforts to combat acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships sailing in waters off the coast of Somalia and, in particular, ships carrying humanitarian aid to the country; and, more particularly,

(2.) to invite the Security Council to request the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to take

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action, as it may be deemed necessary and appropriate in the circumstances, to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, including consenting to ships, as defined in Article 107 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (i.e. warships and ships on Government service), operating in the Indian Ocean, entering its country's territorial waters when engaging in operations against pirates or suspected pirates and armed robbers endangering the safety of life at sea, in particular, the safety of crews on board ships carrying, within the WFP's programme, humanitarian aid to Somalia or leaving Somali ports after having discharged their cargo.

The support of your country's delegation at last month's IMO Council session was most heartening and, therefore, I should be most grateful for such further support when the matter comes up for debate at the Security Council.

Because of the seriousness and urgency of the matter (exacerbated by the fact that, according to information, there are, at present, at least four ships, with their crew, in the hands of pirates operating from Somali shores), any action taken to alleviate the situation will be greatly appreciated.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

/s/
E.E. Mitropoulos
Secretary-General

SIPDIS

His Excellency
Mr. Robert H. Tuttle
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
American Embassy
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1A 1AE

End text of letter.

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